

pound on this issue until there are some positive changes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I wish to associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) and state that unless a bill comes to this floor that has a mechanism in it to have a negotiated rate for large numbers of buyers, as we do with our Department of Defense buying and our Veterans Department buying, we are going to force Americans out there in the drug market in their tiny little canoe on an ocean that is very, very rough. They cannot get a good price unless there is a mechanism within a bill which is cleared here which would provide for negotiated rate buying. I thank the gentleman for bringing this problem up.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, let me say I want to look at the gentleman's approach to making the way we deal with veterans' pharmaceuticals maybe the way that we deal with things under this health bill.

TRIBUTE TO AL DAVIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FEENEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, at a later moment in this Special Order the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT), the ranking member of the Committee on the Budget, will be speaking more fully about Al Davis, the chief economist for the Committee on Ways and Means, and formerly the economist for the House Budget Committee.

Today I come to the floor to pay tribute to Al Davis and express my deepest sympathy to Mary, Al's partner for more than 20 years. Al had a remarkable life, one in which he made an unforgettable and immeasurable contribution to the scope of this country's economic and budgetary policies. Although most Americans will never know his name or his extraordinary contributions, he has influenced each of us in our lives for the better.

Five years after serving in the U.S. Army from 1969 to 1971 during the height of the Vietnam War, Al began his lifelong career as an economist while working for the Wisconsin Revenue Department until 1980. While there, he rose from an analyst to the bureau chief in the research and analysis division in a very short period of time.

During the early 1980s, he served as senior analyst on the Taxation and Finance Committee with the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. And from 1994 to 1998, he was chief economist for the Democratic budget staff and then was the economist since 1999 until his tragic passing just last month as the chief economist for the Committee on Ways and Means.

Al was a master of economic and budgetary policy through four administrations. He helped our committee staff navigate every economic budget and tax proposal put before the U.S. Congress.

Al called us, that is the Members of Congress and his colleagues on the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on the Budget his customers, and he provided us with realms of memos and charts and analysis that only Al could produce. He did it with insight and humor. He stripped away the clutter to extract the critical details of major issues facing the American public.

You would often hear about Al's ability to translate complex and difficult economic concepts for Members, staff, and, of course, the press. On his own, he was a unique gift, but what made Al truly remarkable was his delivery of his translation and the integrity that he actually had which he imposed upon all of us because anyone dealing with Al Davis knew they had to be honest with themselves because of his basic decency and honesty.

When Al found a provision or proposal that he analyzed to be unfair to the American public, this translation, without fail, was laced with humor and simultaneously expressed his frustration, and he always exposed the unfairness of whatever he was working on if he believed it to be unfair.

Over the years, Al Davis provided the Democratic Members of the Committee on Ways and Means with probably 150-200 memos. Most of us read all of them, not only because of the analysis that he gave us, but also because of his humor and his sense of humanity. I would like to take a moment to quote two paragraphs in a January 30, 2003 memo. The subject from Al Davis to the Committee on Ways and Means Democrats is "Snow Hearing Next Week and Budget Deficits." Of course, we had a lot of snow during the month of January, so it was snow hearing and budget deficits. And the caption is "The Return of Budget Deficit as Far as the Eye Can See." He says, and I do not mean to be partisan here, but it is humorous. It is not dry. He says, "Normal mortals would be in the hospital with whiplash if they changed their positions as radically as my Republican colleagues." And then in the same memo he states. "Tax cuts and war look cheap because we are about to put them on a national credit card and pass the costs on to our children."

Al had a way of saying the obvious and stating public policy by actually communicating with a sense of humor to all of us. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that we in this country are very blessed because we have always had through the agencies, through the executive branch and the judicial branch, but particularly through the legislative branch of our government, people who are dedicated to the betterment of our country, and truly Al Davis was a symbol of that standard that all of us are here to certainly aspire to.

Al, we are going to miss you very much and we thank you for everything you have done for all of us.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CULBERSON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IN MEMORY OF AL DAVIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, like the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) who has spoken and the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI) who has now just spoken, and those who will speak after me about Al Davis, I relied on him every day on a wide variety of issues and on this floor and in committee I miss him every day.

When we hit a tough question, the answer was, "Ask Al." We expected and received from him a straight, unvarnished answer, and if he did not know the answer and I can remember many days he would say, "I am not quite sure," off he would go to find the information.

Al Davis was available with memos, with charts. His documents were so plentiful and useful during debates on taxes that the staff in my office often included in my briefing binders a tab entitled simply "Al Davis memos." I cannot recall a tax debate when so many of us did not rely on some document or some analysis that Al Davis prepared. He was prolific. He analyzed tax bills and budgets upside down and backwards. My tax counsel, who assures me that Al's memos were so valuable that he never deleted a single one, counted 44 memos, charts, and other analysis from Al to the committee from March 1 through May 19 of this year. So many points from these memos were used to help shape important tax and budget debates. He was blessed with the ability to take issues that were complex and numbers even more complex and to explain them in ways that everybody could understand. He hated dishonesty and inaccuracy.

In the past 2 weeks, many, particularly those in the media, have commented on how accurate and reliable his work was. His vigilance helped ensure that all of us who relied on him and worked with him also avoided the temptation to let the digestible sound bite overwhelm the accurate and honest debate that America deserves.

The Washington Post in its editorial, rather unusual in terms of a tribute to a staffer unknown to the public, so well known, though, within this institution, this is what the Washington Post had to say. "Unless you are a tax and budget wonk, you probably did not know Al